X-23

DEADLY REGENESIS

MARVEL

4

SCHULTZ
SALAZAR
LOPEZ

Cloned from the mutant Logan, A.K.A. Wolverine, Laura Kinney was made to be the perfect weapon. With adamantium-coated claws on both hands and feet, a healing factor and heightened senses, as X-23, she more than lived up to that promise. Becoming one of the world's most sought-after assassins while still only a teenager, X-23 has been forced to kill by numerous organizations. After escaping that life, Laura joined the X-Men, eventually joining them on Utopia, the island sanctuary established as a haven for mutantkind. Seeking to understand her place in the world, X-23 has struck out on her own, hoping to find the humanity that was so long denied to her…

X-23 DEADLY REGENESIS

PREVIOUSLY...

Laura has been tracked down by her old handler, Kimura. Hoping to capture X-23 at the behest of her employer, Kimura deployed a brawler named Jordan Gastin, A.K.A. Haymaker, to bring her in alive. Haymaker did so grudgingly, as they had a personal score to settle with Laura (who, as an assassin for the Facility, was responsible for killing Jordan's brother years earlier).

Now lieutenant in a twisted drug operation, Kimura wanted Laura back as an assassin. Revealing that most of her workers are hopelessly dependent on the drugs that only she can supply, and that she has a ward full of comatose workers she will kill if Laura doesn't comply, Kimura has forced Laura into doing her bidding once again…

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story takes place prior to *X-23 (2010) #4*.

THE PAST HAUNTS US ALL PART 4

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THERE IS NO ONE TO BLAME BUT MYSELF.

MINNEAPOLIS.

I MADE THE CHOICE TO BE HERE...

...BUT THE ALTERNATIVE WAS *UNACCEPTABLE.*

KIMURA *CANNOT* BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE HER MADNESS...

...NOR THIS "*BOSS*" OF HERS.

THE BOSS WILL BE HERE TONIGHT...

...AND HE'LL WANT TO MAKE SURE THE DEED IS DONE.

IT WILL BE.

SHOW-OFF.

THIS IS NOT UNLIKE MY TIME IN NEW YORK...

LAURA, WAIT!

...WITH KIDEN.

GOTCHA!

SHE WOULD *STOP TIME* WHENEVER I DID SOMETHING... *SELF-DESTRUCTIVE.*

I BELIEVE I AM BETTER THAN THAT NOW.

KIMURA'S OBSESSION WITH ME MAKES HER RUTHLESS.

I MUST NOT LET HER KILL MORE INNOCENTS FOR THIS SICK GAME.

PERHAPS I CAN FIND A VULNERABILITY IN HER SCHEME.

REGARDLESS, CHOOSING TO WORK WITH KIMURA AGAIN TURNS MY STOMACH.

BUT THERE ARE TIMES ONE MUST COMPLETE UNSAVORY TASKS...

SNIKT

...TO SURVIVE.

PSST... X!

--AND THE INCREASE IN COUNTERFEIT MGH HITTING THE STREETS IS DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING TO MORE DEATHS, ESPECIALLY IN YOUNGER DEMOGRAPHICS.

POLICE SOURCES HAVE LINKED SOME OF THE DECEASED TO SEVERAL MISSING-PERSONS CASES IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS.

STAY ON TASK!

I AM.

THIS SHOULD BE HIS BEDROOM.

I CAN MAKE ENTRY HERE.

SNIKT

THK

I MUST MAKE THIS LOOK CONVINCING.

KIMURA MUST *BELIEVE* I AM HER PAWN...

...THAT SHE STILL HAS ME UNDER HER CONTROL.

÷CHOKE÷

÷ACK!÷

QUIT #@&$IN' AROUND, X, AND JUST *KILL* HIM ALREADY.

I BELIEVE, FOR NOW...

WHOA!

...SHE HAS SEEN *ENOUGH.*

KRUNCH

DAMNIT, X!

SNIKT

IN THE PAST, IT WAS SO EASY FOR ME TO KILL.

I WAS NEVER TOLD THERE WAS A CHOICE.

P- PLEASE!

DON'T *HURT* ME!

SLICE

WHAT'RE YOU--

STOP *FIGHTING* ME.

I AM SAVING YOUR LIFE.

GAH!

HOLD STILL, AND ACT DEAD.

KLIK

DO NOT LEAVE THIS APARTMENT FOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS.

WITH LUCK, IT WILL NOT TAKE ME THAT LONG TO DISMANTLE KIMURA'S OPERATION.

I CAN'T JUST DISAPPEAR. I HAVE A JOB. I HAVE TO SEE MY *KIDS*. I--

YOU *WILL* DO AS I SAY.

IF THOSE I WORK FOR LEARN YOU ARE STILL ALIVE, THEY WILL SEND SOMEONE FOR YOU *AND* YOUR FAMILY.

THEY WILL *NOT* HAVE MERCY, AND THEY WILL *NOT* BE KIND.

DO NOT ANSWER THE PHONE.

DO NOT ANSWER THE DOOR.

THIS WILL KEEP YOU AND YOUR *CHILDREN* SAFE.

LATER.

NICE WORK, X.

BUT THE DRONE WENT OFFLINE... *AGAIN.*

I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR INFERIOR TECH.

I'LL LET I.T. KNOW, BUT THESE THINGS ARE EXPENSIVE. I SHOULD START TAKING THEM OUTTA YOUR CHECK...

...OR YOUR *ASS.*

AM I TO BE GETTING *PAID* FOR THIS?

DON'T GET *TOO* COMFORTABLE HERE, X.

"REMEMBER WHAT I CAN DO TO YOU."

I MUST BE MINDFUL OF KIMURA'S TEMPER.

SHE MUST BE KEPT HAPPY... FOR *NOW.*

I REMEMBER.

HOW IS JORDAN FEELING WITH THEIR LATEST INJECTION?

INTERESTING... WHY DO *YOU* GIVE A @%$#?

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THEIR USE OF MGH, BUT I UNDERSTAND THEIR *NEED* FOR IT.

RAGE IS AN ADDICTION. IT GIVES YOU A FALSE SENSE OF POWER...

...BUT THAT FEELING FADES QUICKLY, AND MORE IS NEEDED TO QUELL THE PAIN.

LOOK AT *YOU* GETTIN' ALL PHILOSOPHICAL.

THEY LET YOU READ *BOOKS* THERE ON UTOPIA,* *HUH?*

WE'VE GOT A REGULAR POET LAUREATE HERE.

HMM...YOU'VE GOT SOME TIME BEFORE YOUR NEXT OUTING.

JORDAN'S IN THE GYM.

I'M SURE THEY'LL BE *THRILLED* TO SEE YOU.

*THE ISLAND HOME BASE OF THE X-MEN AND MUTANTKIND! --MB

WHAM

I ASSUMED YOU WOULD BE HITTING A PHOTO OF *ME*.

THIS *SHOULD* BE YOU, BUT KIMURA'S MADE IT CLEAR YOU'RE NOT TO BE HURT... *YET*.

BESIDES...I ASKED AROUND. IT *WAS* KINGPIN WHO ORDERED YOU TO KILL DREW.

I AM GLAD YOU BELIEVE ME, JORDAN.

BUT DON'T GO THINKING WE'RE FRIENDS NOW, OKAY?

JUST 'CAUSE YOU'RE "ONE OF THE TEAM" DOESN'T MEAN I HAVE TO *LIKE* YOU.

THAT IS FINE. I DO NOT LIKE *YOU* EITHER.

I FIND IT...*ODD* THAT YOU HAVE SUCH DISDAIN FOR THE THINGS I HAVE DONE...

...YET YOU ALIGN YOURSELF WITH SOMEONE LIKE KIMURA.

DO YOU *KNOW* WHAT SHE IS CAPABLE OF?

KIMURA'S HELPING ME GET MY CAREER BACK AFTER *YOU* DERAILED IT.

BEFORE.

"DREW ALWAYS KNEW I HAD POTENTIAL."

YEAH, JORDAN! KICK HIS ASS!

"KIMURA SAW THAT POTENTIAL IN ME TOO.

"AND SHE WANTS TO *HELP* ME."

"JORDAN, I DO NOT THINK YOU KNOW THE *TRUE* KIMURA."

GIVE IT TO HER *GOOD*, YA TIN CANS!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

DO YOU THINK SHE GAVE YOU MGH TO *HELP* WITH YOUR FIGHTING?

SHE DID IT TO CONTROL YOU.

ENOUGH OF THIS "ENEMIES BECOME FRIENDS" CRAP.

BREAK UP THE LOVE FEST. I NEED YOU FOR A MISSION, X.

WE ARE HAVING A CONVERSATION.

I DON'T CARE.

REPORT TO GOMEZ FOR YOUR MISSION BRIEF.

WHAT'S THE BOSS' E.T.A.?

DEPENDING ON THE WIND...

...FIVE HOURS, MAYBE?

WELL, THEN I GUESS X-23 BETTER MOVE HER ASS.

LATER, FREIGHT DOCKS NEAR THE TWIN CITIES.

I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER IT IS A GOOD SIGN OR NOT THAT KIMURA KEEPS SENDING ME ON MISSIONS.

PERHAPS SHE IS TESTING ME.

WAITING FOR ME TO PROVE MY LOYALTY...

...OR *BETRAY* HER.

NO DRONE?

NOT THIS TIME.

YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY ***COMPATIBLE*** WITH THAT TECHNOLOGY.

BURNHAM HERE HACKED THE FEED TO THE SECURITY CAMERAS.

SO THEY'RE BLIND, BUT WE CAN SEE EVERYTHING YOU DO.

I CAN'T COMPLETELY LET YOU OFF THE LEASH.

GNNPH...!

STILL GOTTA PROTECT MY ***INVESTMENT.***

HEY, KIMURA. IS THAT A LIVE FEED OF X'S MISSION?

YEP.

STICK AROUND. I'M SURE SHE'LL PUT ON A SHOW.

WHY DIDN'T SHE JUST *KILL* THAT GUARD?

HEY, X... SHAKE A LEG, WILL YA?

KIMURA IS PRESSED FOR TIME.

WHOEVER SHE IS WORKING FOR MUST HAVE HER ON EDGE.

TO SCARE KIMURA IS QUITE A FEAT.

I AM CURIOUS TO KNOW WHO HAS HER PINNED DOWN.

SNIKT

SNIKT

SHUNK

NOW...LET US SEE WHAT WAS DEEMED SO IMPORTANT.

HE'S IN THE CAR NOW.

WHO'RE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

NO...

I--I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.

IT'S OKAY, X-23...I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU.

I CANNOT HURT HER.

THAT'S RIGHT... YOU'RE SAFE.

SNAKT

SHE REMINDS ME...

...OF DR. KINNEY...

...MY MOTHER.

HE SHOULD BE HERE IN ABOUT 10 MINUTES, KIMURA.

I SWEAR TO GOD...

I DON'T NEED HER ALIVE, X.

I CANNOT PRETEND TO HURT HER.

DAMNIT, JUST GET ME THAT TEST TUBE!

SNAKT

SNAKT

AH!

IF KIMURA DOES NOT NEED THIS SCIENTIST ALIVE...

...THEN SHE DOES NOT NEED HER *DEAD*, EITHER.

I HAVE WHAT KIMURA WANTED. THE MISSION IS A SUCCESS.

CONVINCING HER WILL BE--

TNK TNK TNK TNK TNK TNK

HEY!

BRAP BRAP

GNRR!

NOW WE'LL SEE SOME ACTION.

YOU THINK SHE'S GONNA--

I HAVE NO MORE TIME TO WASTE ON HIM...

SHUNK

GNYAA!

...AND MY PATIENCE IS RUNNING OUT.

THIRTY MINUTES LATER.

:SIGH: SHE'S MORE TROUBLE THAN SHE'S WORTH.

HERE.

WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE CARE OF THAT GUARD AND THE LAB COAT?

I DID.

I MEAN *PERMANENTLY.*

YOU SLICED UP HIS GUN.

AND THE SCIENTIST? NOT A FINGER!

THE *OLD* YOU WOULD'VE BROUGHT BACK A SET OF HEARTS FOR ME.

KILLING WAS NOT NECESSARY TO MY OBJECTIVE.

THE TASK WAS TO RETRIEVE THE TEST TUBE.

I RETRIEVED THE TEST TUBE.

QUIT SCREWING AROUND, X. YOU *KNOW* WHAT I MEAN!

YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING IT SAFE, AND I DON'T LIKE IT.

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO START PUTTING BULLETS IN PEOPLE AGAIN.

MAYBE *THIS TIME* I WON'T GO FOR THE INVALIDS.

MAYBE I'LL JUST START WITH *BURNHAM HERE.*

WHOA! WAIT! HEY!

I MUST REMEMBER WHY I AM HERE AND WHAT I MUST DO.

I AM... *SORRY,* KIMURA.

GOOD GIRL...

...BUT STILL.

BLAM

OMIGOD, SHE JUST--

HAVE I MADE MY *POINT*, X?

YES, KIMURA.

GOOD.

NOW, C'MON. THERE'S SOMEONE HERE TO SEE YOU.

IN MY RACE TO GET REVENGE ON KIMURA, I FORGOT THE REASON *WHY* I AM HERE.

THIS MAN'S DEATH IS ON ME.

TIME FOR YOU TO MEET YOUR *BENEFACTOR.*

THAT IS A MISTAKE I MUST *NOT* MAKE AGAIN.

YOU TOO, JORDAN.

ME?

IN YA GO...BOTH OF YOU.

NO...

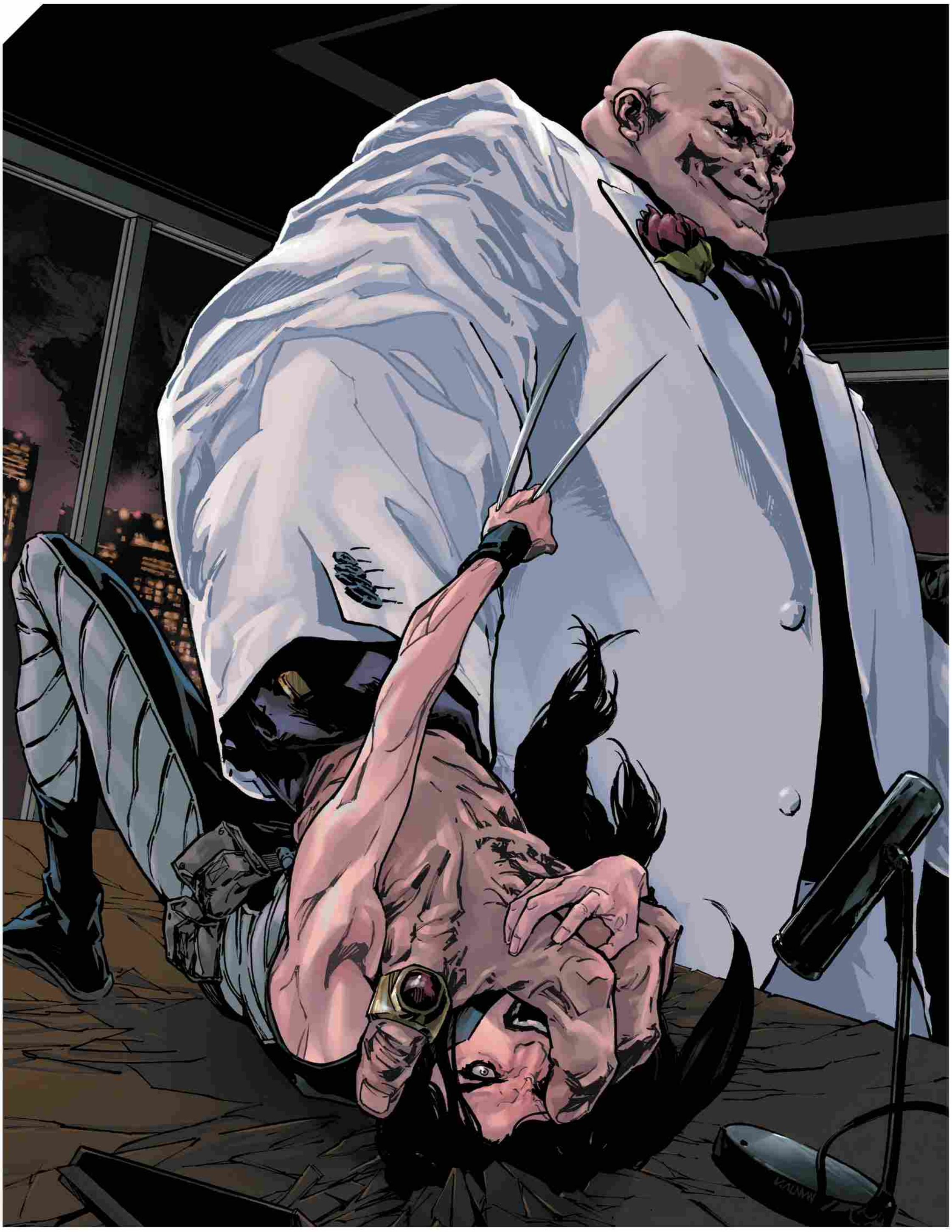
SNIKT

IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, X-23.

NEXT: DEADLY REUNION!

NEXT...

X-23 DEADLY REGENESIS #5



Laura must escape Kingpin's clutches to save Kimura's hostages!

ZONE